

Hamas could agree to elections'

AMMAN (AP) — A Palestinian group waging a guerrilla war against Israel said Monday it would take part in elections in the occupied territories. Ahmed Yassin, head of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, had until his release last year in favour of participating in elections in the Gaza Strip and West Bank if they were for a legislative council. Sheikh Yasser Arafat, currently an Israeli prisoner, wrote in letters that he wanted Hamas to become the opposition party in such a council, the newspaper said after it was signed between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel on Sept. 13. The deal calls for elections to a council with limited legislative powers to take place by July. The newspaper report did not make clear if the proposed council met the PLO's expectations for law-making authority. But it was the first sign that Hamas, which has a strong following in the territories, could in the future take part in the peace process. Israeli officials said in October that PLO leader Yasser Arafat had twice requested Sheikh Yassin's release, but that the authorities refused. The Hamas leader was condemned to life imprisonment in 1991 for ordering the killing of two Israeli soldiers.

Jordan Times

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جريدة الأردن تنشر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية العربية، الرأي

German foreign minister in Saudi Arabia

JEDDAH (AP) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel arrived Monday for talks with Saudi Arabian leaders on the Middle East peace process, Iraq and Iran and bilateral ties. The visit, the first in six years by Bonn's chief diplomat, follows trips to Egypt and Syria in May. During his three-day stay in Saudi Arabia, he is scheduled to meet the foreign minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal, and King Fahd. Mr. Kinkel will then go to Jordan, another prominent player in the U.S.-sponsored Arab-Israeli peace process. Mr. Kinkel's trip is in advance of a European Community (EC) foreign ministers meeting in Brussels Nov. 8 to discuss political and economic support for the Sept. 13 peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Mr. Kinkel was quoted as saying in a recent interview with the London-based *Al Hayat* daily that Germany will be "normalizing" its relations with the PLO. But he cautioned that full diplomatic relations with the PLO could only come when there is a Palestinian state. Saudi Arabia is Bonn's primary trading partner in the Arab World and Mr. Kinkel will be seeking to develop those links with joint economic ventures. Germany's deputy defence minister, Jorg Schonbohm, also visited Saudi Arabia recently.

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Aсад denies 'warning' Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad was quoted Monday as describing Jordanian-Syrian relations as good. He also referred to Jordan's constant commitment to comprehensive, just and permanent peace in the region. The Syrian president denied in an interview published in the Egyptian daily *Al Ahram* newspaper Monday that Syria had "warned" Jordan against striking a peace agreement with Israel and said that Syria had good relations with Jordan.

Japanese mission in talks with PLO

TUNIS (R) — An aid mission from Japan, which has promised up to \$200 million in assistance to the Palestinians, has arrived in Tunis for talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), a Japanese embassy spokesman said on Monday. The group will meet senior PLO officials on Tuesday to begin talks on projects to help the Palestinians rebuild their economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, he said. The two sides will also "exchange views on ways for Japan to help the Palestinians," the spokesman added. Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa announced last month that Japan would provide up to \$200 million in aid to the Palestinian people in the next two years.

Israeli-allied militia captures Syrian

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Israel's proxy militia announced Monday it had captured a heavily-armed Syrian guerrilla trying to infiltrate the Jewish state's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon. The South Lebanon Army (SLA) said the 26-year-old man was armed with an AK-47 submachine gun, grenades and ammunition when he was stopped and taken at the edge of the "security zone." He offered no resistance.

Columbia lands in California

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE (AP) — Columbia and its medical research crew swooped through the clear desert sky and landed Monday after 14 days in space — the longest flight in shuttle history. The spaceship and seven astronauts landed at Edward Air Force Base at 1506 GMT. A clear sky and light wind in the Mojave desert made for virtually perfect landing weather. "Congratulations on a very successful life sciences mission," mission control told commander John Blaha and his crew.

Bosnian chief put under house arrest

SARAJEVO (AP) — The chief of the Bosnian army's general staff, Sefter Halilovic, has been placed under house arrest charged with covering up war crimes, a senior government official said Monday. The move against Gen. Halilovic follows the arrest last week of two local commanders in Sarajevo and the smashing of a network of criminal activities. The official, who would not be identified, said Gen. Halilovic was accused of concealing war crimes, in particular in the Mostar and Jahimica areas.

Tehran seeks Lebanese probe

BEIRUT (AP) — Iran has asked Lebanon to set up an investigating committee to determine the fate of four Iranian missing in Lebanon since Israel's 1982 invasion, the Iranian embassy said Monday. The new Iranian ambassador, Hamayoun Alizadeh, conveyed the request on Friday when he presented his credentials to Lebanese President Elias Hrawi, the embassy said in a statement.

Israel tables plan for Gaza pullout

Combined agency dispatches

KABO, Egypt — Israel for the first time presented the Palestinians with a detailed plan for a military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip at autonomy negotiations here Monday.

But the opening of the fourth round of talks on implementing self-rule was marred by a third day of violence in the occupied territories.

Settlers, who set up roadblocks, rioted around a West Bank refugee camp firing shots at Palestinians, smashing car and house windows and burning a classroom, correspondents reported (see separate story).

General Yom Tov Samia, army commander in Gaza, gave the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) delegation at Taba one map showing current army positions and another showing proposed withdrawal lines. Israeli delegation spokesman Ami Gluska said.

The three areas would be

protected by electronic barriers and linked to Israel by roads which avoid built-up Palestinian areas and have no roadside dwellings.

Palestinian delegate Hasan Asfour said his side would present a counter-proposal in a day or two. He was tight-lipped when asked his response to the Israeli map, quipping: "We saw the map, we listened, and it has many colours."

Still there were no signs of tension. The Israeli spokesman described the meeting as "business-like." An Israeli and Palestinian delegate spoke animatedly in Arabic while walking arm-in-arm during a recess.

The peace deal, signed in Washington on Sept. 13, says Israel will withdraw from Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho to make way for Palestinian self-rule. The tent of the Israeli withdrawal is

(Continued on page 5)

Attacker on border post worked in New York mosque

AMMAN (I.T.) — The militant who led an armed attack on a Jordanian border post on Friday used to work in the same New York mosque as the alleged mastermind behind the World Trade Centre bombing, his widow said Monday.

Iman Hajjat said her husband Hassan Hussein Hajjat, a Jordanian of Palestinian origin, worked at Brooklyn's Al Farouq Mosque while he was in the United States, from 1991 until his return to Jordan a few months ago.

Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the spiritual leader of Muslim militants in Egypt who is currently under arrest in the United States on conspiracy charges, preached at Al Farouq.

(Continued on page 5)

Oakley launches new bid

MOGADISHU (AFP) — American tanks rumbled through the streets of Mogadishu Monday in an apparent show of military might as the U.S. special envoy to Somalia, Robert Oakley, arrived.

Mr. Oakley will try to persuade feuding Somali factional leaders to start peace negotiations.

It was not immediately clear which clan leaders he would meet during his four-day stay in the Somali capital, but a spokesman for the Somali National Alliance (SNA) headed by warlord Moham-

(Continued on page 3)



Palestinian schoolboys remove what was left from their desks, burned by Jewish settlers in the schoolroom of the Jalazun refugee camp Monday (AFP photo)

Settlers continue riots against Palestinians, torch classroom

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (Agencies) — Jewish settlers blocked roads with burning tyres and torched a Palestinian classroom Monday in the fourth day of their riots against a government they say is sacrificing them for peace with the Palestinians.

The rampages erupted three days ago when Muslim militants killed a settler, and in their scope and intensity marked a turning point in the settlers' resistance to the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiations.

The rage also underscored how easily extremists on both sides can upset a peace agreement by provoking the other side into harsh reactions.

"Every crazy settler and every crazy Muslim fundamentalist can spoil everything in a minute," said Israeli journalist Danny Rubinstein, a veteran observer of the occupied territories.

Extremist violence appeared more likely with every report on progress in the negotiations on Palestinian self-rule. A majority of Israelis and Palestinians support the talks that

resumed in Egypt on Monday (see separate story), leaving opponents in both camps isolated and feeling they have little left to lose.

In Beit El, a settlement of 3,000 about 15 kilometres north of Jerusalem, residents said Monday that they would retaliate harshly for any Arab attack on Jews because they felt the government no longer protected them.

Before dawn settlers who blocked a road block near a refugee camp had smashed windows in Arab homes and damaged cars, an AFP photographer reported.

Palestinians responded by throwing stones and about a dozen settlers opened fire in the dark although no one was wounded.

The settlers, armed with Uzis, took aim and were definitely trying to hit Palestinians, the photographer said. Soldiers arrived after about 10 minutes and restored calm.

Shortly after a group of Israelis broke into a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) at Jalazun camp near Ramallah, an UNRWA spokesman

said.

"The classroom was completely burnt out after settlers piled up all the benches and set them ablaze," said spokesman Sandro Tucci. "We are checking unconfirmed reports that bottles of gas were left in two other classrooms."

"The windows were smashed in eight classrooms between five and six a.m.," he added.

Two Palestinians died Sunday, one shot by soldiers and another by his Israeli employer who was stabbed.

Meanwhile 50 senior reserve army officers and right-wing academics called Monday on soldiers and policemen to disobey any orders to dismantle settlements, the Haaretz newspaper reported.

Such orders were "illegal" according to a petition from the group which included reserve generals and was published by the daily.

"We are appealing to your conscience and asking you not to take part in any plan to evacuate Jewish villages," the petition read.

(Continued on page 5)

Last French hostage released in Algeria

ALGIERS (Agencies) — A Frenchwoman freed by kidnappers after more than a week's captivity left Algeria Monday, some 24 hours after her husband and a colleague flew to Paris after their release.

Michele Thevenot was accompanied to Algiers airport by French Ambassador Bernard Kessedjian. They paused briefly for photographs but neither made any statement to waiting reporters.

A Muslim fundamentalist leader in exile urged foreigners to leave the country, and hundreds have already left after suspected fundamentalists insurgents killed seven expatriates since September.

Government forces who killed at least six kidnappers to free two of the three French consular workers on Saturday night pressed on with their hunt Monday for other suspects.

Ms. Thevenot was freed Sunday night near the French embassy in an exclusive hillside section of the capital.

Ex-captives Alain Freyssier and Mrs. Thevenot's husband, Jean-Claude, returned to Paris on Sunday night, greeted by French officials.

"We weren't badly treated during our detention," Mr. Freyssier said in a brief declaration. "Our kidnappers gave us food in a proper way. They didn't use violence of any kind against us."

French officials thanked the government of Prime Minister Redha Malek for the successful dragnet they launched throughout the capital to recover the hostages.

But the kidnapping of the three French consular workers in broad daylight downtown Oct. 24 was still a blow to the government, which has been unable to stamp out a 21-month-old fundamentalist

(Continued on page 5)

Amman Third District: The acid test for politics and politicians

This is the third in a series of articles by Jordan Times correspondents on candidates and campaigns in the individual constituencies in the Kingdom

By Nermene Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The parliamentary race for Amman's Third District, being the most affluent and elitist among all voting constituencies in the Kingdom, is considered by many as the ultimate litmus test for candidates running on political, rather than clannish and strictly provincial platforms.

Political observers expect that the race for the Muslim seats.

A minimum of 5,000 votes is needed to win any Muslim seat, according to some candidates and their campaign managers.

It is the only district where a woman has a real hope of being elected, where the Christian seat will be contested mainly by sworn leftists and radical pan-Arabists, and where the Islamic Action Front (IAF) most wants to win.

The race for the constituency's five seats (three Muslims, one Christian and one Circassian) is probably one of the most fiercely contested and financially expensive in the Kingdom.

Judging by the number of registered voters (104,000), this district also ranks as the second most populated in the Amman area.

In order to win, a candidate needs between 4,000 and 4,250 votes if the turnout for voting in Nov. 8 is similar to that in 1989 (about 50 per cent), according to a study done recently by Al-Urdan Al-Jadid (New Jordan) Research Centre.

But the candidates themselves (who include in their ranks a former prime minister and a son and a daughter of two other former prime ministers) project that higher figures are needed to win, particularly by the contestants.



1993

The IAF candidate, Dr. Kialani, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood team that joined Mudar Badran's coalition government in the first six months of 1991, is a strong contender who is said to be counting on some 5,000 solid votes by automatic supporters.

The absence from the race this time of strong Islamist contenders, who ran for the same district before, will guarantee that most, if not all, of the Islamist conservative vote will go to Dr. Kialani, a former professor of Sharia at Jordan University.

The Islamists who are not running this time are former Deputy Laith Shbeihat, an independent who quit politics in the summer and who won the highest number of votes in 1989; Circassian contender Walid Shukri Shabsough, who won a sizeable 6,873 votes in the same campaign; and Muslim Brotherhood candidate Ghaleb Abu Abboud, who ranked fourth in the same district in '89 with 5,802 votes.

The candidacy of another independent Islamist, Sheikh Sami Najjar, may hurt Dr. Kialani's chances, but a bigger threat would have probably come from the running of another popular Islamist candidate, Sheikh Abdul Qader Al Sheikh, who preaches at Western Amman's Sido Al Kurdi Mosque.

Sheikh Al Sheikh withdrew his candidacy earlier in the campaign without giving particular reasons, but it is understood from observers that his withdrawal from the race should also benefit Mr. Abu Ragheb, whose supporters include Jordanians of roots in Damascus (Shwam).

With the change in law, however, the three secular candidates have easily formed a formidable bloc that would have been able to include, on a winning ticket, the Circassian and Christian candidates as well.

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Taher Al Masri



Fares Nabulsi



Ali Abu Ragheb



Ibrahim Zeid Al Kialani

a sizeable and affluent voting bloc in the Third District. Had he stayed on, the Sheikh, being the imam of Shwam mosque, would have taken votes from both Mr. Abu Ragheb and Dr. Kialani.

In 1989, Mr. Masri won 6,482 votes and Mr. Nabulsi won 7,801, while Mr. Shbeihat's count was 14,740. Mr. Abu Ragheb also ran in 1989 but could only manage fifth place with 4,992 votes.

The Circassian seat is being contested by two women, Jeanette Mufti and Toujan Faisal, and one man, former Deputy Mansour Murad.

Mr. Murad, who won in 1989 with 8,747 votes, is not expected to fare as well in this round, partially because of the electoral change, and also because many voters have been disenchanted with his performance in the 11th Parliament due to his ultra-radical views that often found him in league with the parliamentary bloc of the Brotherhood when it came.

This will not be the case this time, however, since "Palestinian voters" are expected to back either Mr. Masri or Mr. Nabulsi, and the leftists will have an array of choices before them, but

himself as a Palestinian fighter and a leftist during the previous campaign, was able to attract a combination of the "Palestinian vote" and leftists who gave him their second or third vote when they could vote for a bloc of five. This will not be the case this time, however, since "Palestinian voters" are expected to back either Mr. Masri or Mr. Nabulsi, and the leftists will have an array of choices before them, but

mainly Mr. Nabulsi, or candidates vying for the Christian seat.

Peace efforts bring more Somali fighting

MOGADISHU (AP) — Talk of peace seems to be on everyone's tongue in Mogadishu, but they are keeping weapons in their hands.

The last week has brought death and confrontation, all allegedly in the name of reunifying a city split by a factional dispute that has burst into the open again after a 19-month-old ceasefire.

A peace march that was supposed to cross the dividing green line last Monday led to a flurry of firefights between supporters of Mohammad Farah Aideed, who controls the southern part of the city, and Ali Mahdi Mohammad, who rules the north.

Clan elders usually command respect and try to mediate disputes. But when a group of them sought a ceasefire to the battles that raged over three days near the key Kilometre Four traffic circle, they came under fire.

On Sunday, several men came to the hotel where most journalists stay to say they are promoting peace within General Aideed's faction. As they left, they were confronted by a group of angry young Aideed supporters. A warning shot staved off possible violence.

This is the atmosphere that U.S. special envoy Robert Oakley was to find Monday in his bid to foster a lasting peace settlement in a country shattered by three years of civil war, starvation and banality before a U.S.-led multinational force arrived nearly 11 months ago.

Many of the improvements in the security of Mogadishu's streets have been lost during four months of attacks on U.N. forces that have killed dozens of peacekeepers. Gunmen openly tote AK-47 rifles again. Dozens of rocket-propelled grenades blasted at targets in the last week.

In the midst of the violence, there are signs of division of voices calling for a different path to reconciliation.

Mohammad Mohammad

Guled is one of the "promoters of peace" from within Gen. Aideed's faction. A businessman before the war, he talks of the thirst that Gen. Aideed and Mr. Ali Mahdi have for power.

"This source of the problem is these two power-ambitious people," he said in an interview Sunday. "Neither Ali Mahdi nor Aideed want peace. They want to keep Mogadishu divided."

He said the two warlords have milked the tribal loyalties and natural mistrusts of the hundreds of thousands of people who fled to the city from around the dangerous countryside for food and safety.

"They know how to mislead the people," Mr. Guled said.

"They know they won't get any political chance if the democratic process prevails in the country," Mr. Guled said. "They will be kicked out."

That is why Mr. Guled worries about the planned withdrawal of U.S. forces from the U.N. contingent by March 31. If the country is not well on its way to getting back on its feet, it could easily fall back into the same chaos that reigned a year ago and threatens to prevail again.

"It will be worse than before," he said. "We have to convince the people we need peace, to show the world there are more than the two factions."

While Mr. Guled said many people hoped that Gen. Aideed would be captured early in his four-month-old period of hiding, he said that no longer should be a priority.

"It's not necessary to chase him," Mr. Guled said. "Let him participate in the national reconciliation. I think he won't have any political credibility with the Somali people. If the Somali people want him as head of state, they deserve him. But I don't think so. They see Aideed is a madman."



PROTEST: A Palestinian woman holding the pictures of her three jailed sons shows her anger to Israeli policemen looking on during a demonstration in Arab East Jerusalem Monday, demanding the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Iran tourism faces major hurdles

By Laurent Maillard
Agence France Presse

TEHRAN — Iran has stepped up efforts to revive its tourism industry, hard-hit by war and years of neglect, but faces obstacles and opposition from Islamic hardliners.

Iran, which prior to the 1979 Islamic revolution was a major tourist centre renowned for spectacular historical monuments and natural beauty, has witnessed a steady decline in the number of foreign visitors.

Some 700,000 tourists visited Iran every year before the revolution, but the number dropped to a mere 7,000 in 1988, at the end of an eight-year war with Iraq and amid radical Islamic internal politics.

The number has picked up since as a result of open-door policies pursued by the government of President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, but it is still far from the goal set by the tourist industry at the beginning of the five-year development programme in 1989.

The industry anticipated receiving 900,000 tourists per year by 1993 and an income of \$450 million in bard currency, but according to officials from the culture ministry only \$103 million were earned in 1992.

The officials said some 200,000 tourists, mainly from Islamic countries, visited here last year.

It was not clear whether the figure includes business trips by foreigners, which have jumped dramatically in the past four years due to a sharp rise in imports.

The problems facing the industry range from a lack of proper accommodation, to strict Islamic social laws, to opposition from hardliners.

Iran has not built a single major hotel since the revolution, and services provided by the existing ones — generally confiscated properties previously owned by the entourage of the former Shah — are ill-equipped by international standards.

The industry is also impaired by a shortage of domestic flights needed to transfer tourists to provincial cities, and the state-owned tourist agencies are few in number and far from efficient.

All this bodes poorly for the blossoming of tourism in a country that offers visitors such splendours as the city of Esfahan, one of the jewels in the crown of Muslim civilisation, and Persepolis, the palace built more than 2,500 years ago by the great emperors of the Persian empire.

To tackle the problems, the Foundation of the Needy and War Disabled (FNWD) — a non-profit organisation overseeing confiscated properties — has unveiled plans to privatise tourist agencies and has allocated \$50 million for building hotels and remodeling the existing ones.

The government has organised fairs to publicise the issue and last week set up a seminar on promoting tourism.

In addition to infrastructure problems, the industry also faces stiff opposition from the Islamic hardliners, who fear revived tourism could endanger the country's Islamic lifestyle and pave the way for the return of the Western influences that stoked the fires of the revolution.

"We should remember how Western values, imported through tourism, dominated and threatened the very texture of our culture," warned the radical newspaper Kayhan last month.

"What international tourism seeks to promote is to give a free reign to cultural promiscuity," it said.

Resalat, a conservative religious daily took a similar line and attacked a fair on tourism set up last September.

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"What international tourism seeks to promote is to give a free reign to cultural promiscuity," it said.

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Despite the candidates' obvious differences, their campaign has focused largely on questions about Mr. Kollek's age and Mr. Olmert's character.

Mr. Kollek, using a lion as his campaign symbol, has revisited allegations that Mr. Olmert exploited his political position for financial gain.

Mr. Kollek says that for the sake of peace, Arabs and Jews should live in separate areas. Mr. Olmert says Jews should be allowed to live anywhere and his party has angered Arabs by settling Jews in the heart of their neighborhoods.

Under the Israeli-PLO peace deal, the future of Jerusalem is to be discussed in negotiations at least two years off. Yet peace and the fate of the Holy City have ranked high on the campaign agenda.

'Mr. Kollek and Mr. Olmert agree on the "unity" of the Jewish West with the Arab East which was seized in the 1967 Middle East war and "annexed." Both back Jewish development of East Jerusalem.

But critics say the much-vaunted plan is a front for the powerful, led by the billionaire Hariri, to make new fortunes out of at best reducing the centre to a concrete jungle jammed with traffic.

They say the company, as the only government-approved project, has trampled on landowners' rights.

In exchange for their land and rights as tenants valued by a state-appointed committee at \$1.17 billion they will receive 65 per cent of the company in the form of 11.7 million (a) shares.

Those at odds with the rebuilding programme or who want to retain their land rather than have to buy it back at half the value are the most strident opponents of the company. But most admit they have virtually no chance of stopping Solidere.

The project covers a total

land area of 1.6 million square metres and plots to develop a built-up area of 4.4 million square metres of floor space according to market conditions.

Mr. Chamaa denies Solidere

describes as an "ingenious solution" to the problem of the differing demands of 150,000 Lebanese who either owned real estate in the city centre or had rights to it as tenants when the war broke out in 1975.

Solidere's publicity cam-

paign includes posters pro-

claiming: "Beirut is for you, ask about it," to which the critics have rejoiced the counter-slogan: "Beirut is for us, leave it alone."

The key to Solidere is what it

describes as an "ingenious solu-

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Lebanese who either owned

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In the last city election five

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Candidate withdraws in favour of woman contender

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times



AMMAN — A Third District Circassian candidate Monday withdrew from the elections, in favour of a Circassian woman candidate.

Kamal Jallouqa announced in a press conference that he stepped aside to give candidate Janet Mufti a better chance at winning the district's Circassian seat in parliament.

"A group of people came to me from Ms. Mufti's camp and asked me to step aside to increase her chances of winning the elections, thus making her the first woman to serve in the (Lower House of) Parliament, so I decided to withdraw," said Mr. Jallouqa.

The 45-year-old engineer added that he realised after several contacts with the public that people were sym-

pathetic towards seeing a woman in the Lower House.

"Since there was only one Circassian seat, and two women and two men were competing for it, I thought it

was important to unite the votes and withdraw to give a chance to another candidate, especially that the Circassian votes are limited," he said.

If Ms. Mufti wins, said Mr. Jallouqa, it will be a source of pride to all Circassians.

"It will be an honour for us if a Circassian woman makes it to Parliament," said Mr. Jallouqa.

He said he expected most of his supporters to vote for Ms. Mufti, because, he said, there were several basic issues in common between him and Ms. Mufti.

"I think most of the votes I collected from my campaign will go to Ms. Mufti, and my role is to explain her credentia-

lity," he added.

Ms. Mufti later told the Jordan Times that she was not planning to ask Mr. Jallouqa to withdraw his candidacy, but a group of her supporters mediated in her

favour and requested Mr. Jallouqa to step aside.

"I didn't know about it, but when I knew he agreed to step aside, I went and thanked him personally," she said.

The Circassian candidate said she was delighted with Mr. Jallouqa's decision which is going to serve her interests.

"I was very happy with Mr. Jallouqa's initiative," she said, adding that the votes she will gain from withdrawal will increase her chances of winning.

She said that Mr. Jallouqa's courageous move proved that he supports women and is willing to vote in favour of women.

Mr. Jallouqa said that he would run for parliament next time, and be stressed that his move was made only to serve the public interest and to unify ranks.

Kamal Jallouqa



Election hopefuls respond to issue-oriented questions

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Appeals to special interest groups were swept aside as more concrete political discussion about issues as varied as national identity, the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank accords and the Arab-Israeli peace process surfaced when a group of candidates vied for the votes of some 400 people attending an election debate Sunday evening.

Rather odd and unproactive introductory comments by Third District candidate Janet Mufti, Riad Shakaa, Mansour Murad and Abdul Fatah Toukan and First District contender Azmi Khawaja came to an end when the audience began a lively question and answer session.

Mr. Toukan was the odd person out in the discussion as a result of his distinctly pro status quo views. Of the five candidates, he was the only one who unequivocally supported the one-person-one-vote formula, the peace process, the IMF accord and was the only candidate who said he would "absolutely" give a vote of confidence to the current government if he were elected to the Lower House of Parliament.

He was subsequently

jeered by the audience, but insisted on his stand.

Meanwhile Janet Mufti, one of two speakers Sunday who is running for the sole Circassian seat in the Third District, took a more populist stand on nationalist political issues.

"I will cut my hand rather than shake the hand of Israel," said Ms. Mufti repeating the phrase her father, Said Mufti, coined when he served as Jordan's Prime Minister in the 1950s.

Concentrating on women's rights, Ms. Mufti said she would lobby to have existing charters and laws implemented to improve conditions of women in the country. Economically, she said, she saw no immediate alternative to the IMF/World Bank debt restructuring programmes that had already been "imposed" on Jordan, but said she would welcome a viable alternative.

Both Mansour Murad, one of Ms. Mufti's two rivals for the Circassian seat, (see story above) and Azmi Khawaja, who heads the Jordan Democratic Popular Party, said that Sudan's refusal to go along with IMF/World Bank programmes have worked out to be exemplary. Citing wheat and meat exports, the two candidates implied that Jor-

dan bad the option to follow the Sudanese example.

Both candidates lamented that the Parliament had no role in drawing up economic, political or social programmes of the current government and said they would refrain from giving any government a vote of confidence if they, as parliamentarians, were not involved in the drafting of national policies.

Mr. Khawaja and Mr. Murad attacked the peace process questioning not only the viability of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel agreement but the Jordanian-Israeli agenda as well.

"We were never asked," said Mr. Murad, who is running for a second term in the Lower House.

In contrast, Riad al Shakaa veiled his support for the status quo.

Responding to a question put to each debater, on whether the candidate would give a vote of confidence to the current government, he said that he would "not give any government a vote of confidence until he studied its programme and thus be avoided answering a direct yes or no."

Mr. Shakaa, who served as Minister of Justice under former Prime Minister Zeid

Rifai, also said that at the moment there was no alternative to the IMF accords.

He won much applause from the audience for an emotional pledge of allegiance to Jordan. "Ask me whether I am Jordanian or Palestinian. I am both. If I were not loyal to Nablus and Palestine — I could not be loyal to Jordan — those who are not proud of their origins cannot be proud of anything," Mr. Shakaa told the crowd who awarded him loudest applause of the evening.

"I challenge anyone to prove that there was any wrongdoing or any mismanagement during my term in the Zeid Rifai Cabinet," Mr. Shakaa told the crowd. "I take full responsibility for all my actions and if I had wronged, I would not be running as a people's representative now."

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Opinion & Analysis

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Hard facts, one goal

THE PROJECTED meeting of the higher Jordanian-Palestinian committee in Amman next week offers yet another opportunity to put the Palestinian-Jordanian relations on track. There has been considerable rhetoric lately, both positive and negative about the future coordination and cooperation between the two sides, especially in the wake of the eventual implementation of the Gaza-Jericho first accord between Israel and the PLO. Now it is time to set aside this rhetoric and proceed with well-intentioned synchronisation of positions, based on clarity and forethought. And now that Jordan has made it clear to all sides that it will not be intimidated or brushed aside, the PLO can straighten up its contacts with the Jordanian side on all levels. As is, the future of the area is still shrouded by uncertainty, not to mention ill feeling, that awaits resolution one way or another.

The events of the last few weeks have proven that Jordan's stance on the peace talks with Israel is absolutely right. This vindication of the country's posture came on the heels of earlier evidence that the concerns of the Kingdom are right, especially with regard to the need for greater and deeper understanding between the PLO and Jordan. Since no less than PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali will preside over the meeting, there is sufficient basis for optimism that the omissions of the past can be addressed and even rectified in good faith.

Needless to point out that the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations are not exactly strewn with roses. There are many hurdles awaiting their peace discussions, most of which are security-related. It is obvious that the enemies of the PLO-Israel accord are many and powerful. It is also clear that the Palestinian side cannot on its own handle the formidable security and political issues that await it. Not too long ago, it has been observed that the two banks of the River Jordan are but the two lungs by which peace between Israel and the Arab side can have a chance to breathe. This awareness is all the more fitting now that the hard facts associated with the PLO-Israeli peace parleys appear to stalemate their progress on several fronts. There is nothing that would please both the Jordanian and the Palestinian peoples than to see their representatives acting in concert and in good faith for a change.

The future of the two peoples is interlocked no matter what some elements attempt to think of them. We Jordanians can be expected to do our part to bring the two camps closer to acceptable harmony and cooperation. His Majesty King Hussein has repeatedly underscored the inevitability and indispensability of brotherly relations between the two Arab peoples. In the same vein, the Monarch has emphasised the commitment of Jordan to all Jordanians, no matter where they come from or go to. This principled position should set the stage for a new, clean slate as far as the future of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Jordanians in the East Bank. Gone are the complexes and innuendoes that often haunted the relationship between the two peoples. The atmosphere cannot be cleared any more only by the Jordanian side. Now it is up to the PLO also to make things clear for all concerned, including its own people. Whoever fails the Jordanians and the Palestinians in the crucial period that lies ahead has to assume total responsibility for it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST IN Al Ra'i Arabic daily was strongly critical of the huge number of candidates running for the Nov. 8 elections, noting that the majority are not politicians, notable personalities or representatives of political parties. Describing the big number of advertisement in the press and the flood of banners filling the streets of the Kingdom's cities as a circus, Tareq Masa'el said that these candidates have no right to ask the public for support as they are very little known and they offer no programmes for their future work in Parliament in case they are elected. It is true that the Interior Ministry has no power to curtail the number of candidates, but the voters themselves have the right to choose only those candidates who they believe are able to do good service to the country and their countrymen, added the writer. The voters ought to choose those candidates who announce a national programme and who in the past have proved their stand and their commitment to work for the country and for the local community, called the writer. The writer said that Jordan does not lack eligible and qualified men and women who can serve their country and the interests of the voters through the legislative branch of government. He said that the public ought to be introduced to the voters so that they can decide whether they are qualified to represent them in Parliament or not and whether they are politically oriented for such an important position.

A COLUMNIST IN Al Dustour daily warned the Palestinian people against allowing hostile elements to tamper with their unity and their just struggle to attain their rights. Saleh Qallab said that the assassinations of Saifawi and other Palestinian leaders in Gaza and the West Bank bear the signs of a conspiracy and could trigger a civil strife that would end the dreams of freedom of the Palestinian people. A civil war which only serves the ends of the enemies of the Palestinian people would be the deadly weapon that would destroy any hope for the Palestinian people for an independent state and freedom from occupation, stressed the writer. The killing of the Palestinian activists who had fought hard for peace following their struggle for freedom could pave the way for a Lebanese style or a Somali style civil strife that would benefit none of the factions vying for leadership nor fulfil the aspirations of the people whose objectives these parties are supposed to achieve, he added. The writer said that the Palestinian factions should not serve elements who operate in the dark and who seek to strengthen their own selfish position at the international level by sacrificing the interests and the souls of the Palestinians. The Palestinian people, he added, should not allow themselves to be misled by the empty slogans which can only serve the enemies of the Arab Nation.

The View from Fourth Circle

Palestine – an idea of goodness instead of disfigurement

The renowned Palestinian scholar Edward Said has written a powerful criticism of the Israel-PLO agreement in the Arabic-language newspaper Al Hayat. One may agree or disagree with his substantive criticisms of the accord (I tend to agree with the points he makes, but I still feel the accord is the right way to proceed towards Palestinian and Arab rights). He notes, however, that perhaps more important than the accord itself is the challenge of nation-building that now faces the Palestinians, and all Arabs by extension.

It is a testament to Edward Said's humanism and brilliance that he helps us muster the broad vision required to venture into the uncharted landscape of new modes of Arab governance and statehood in the closing years of this century — a century that has been chronically unkind and unfair to this region and its people. Edward Said challenges us to avoid fighting yesterday's battle, to rid ourselves of the Arab penchant to wallow in the emotionalism and defeatism of the past and, instead, to grasp the opportunities that history has placed before this imperfect region, its contorted states and its beleaguered people.

Edward Said's challenge is epic in its historical context and audaciously herculean in its defiance of our dominant emotionalism. He writes: "After all the hoopla celebrating 'the first stop towards a Palestinian state,' we should remind ourselves that much more important than having a state is the kind of state it is. The modern history of the post-colonial

"This is an opportunity to close the sad chapter of colonial and imperial agony and of the South's staggering post-colonial stupor. ... This is an opportunity to forge a more humane and rational model of statehood that is not fearful of its own people or so eccentrically possessive of bits of land that it forgets about the quality of life of the human beings who live on that land."

world is disfigured with one-party tyrannies, rapacious oligarchies, economic ruin, the distortion of society caused by western 'investments', and large-scale pauperisation through famine, civil war, outright robbery. Any more than religious fundamentalism, mere nationalism is not, and can never be 'the answer' to the problems of new secular societies. Potential statehood in Palestine is no exception, especially given so inauspicious a start where one can already alas see the lineaments of an appealing marriage between the chaos of civil war in Lebanon and the tyranny of Saddam Hussein's Iraq."

He suggests that a top priority is a Palestinian census, to identify and count the Palestinian people wherever they may be in this world, to be followed perhaps by worldwide elections by all the Palestinian people. A census is not only a practical need in order to address the logistics of repatriation, compensation and building institutions to address the practical needs and rights of individual people; it is also an act of political affirmation, an extra-territorial, trans-national act of self-assertion in the face of a world that has spoken softly of assuring Palestinian national rights for over half a century without providing practical manifestation of such an endeavour.

We would do well to listen to the message that Edward Said is sending and make the effort to shift from a painful exercise

in retrospective nationalistic moaning to the exhilarating promise of resuscitating the political humanism and national vitality of our Arab/Islamic/Semitic societies. We now require vision, compassion, moral power and the diligence of men and women of great dreams. These forces are all within ourselves if we dare to unlock them — and if we are not bombed from the air by foreign powers waving United Nations resolutions while the unlocking is taking place.

The promise of limited Palestinian self-government in a transitional phase, under the eyes of Israeli guns and settlers, is patently humiliating and nonsensical if it is seen as a prize in itself. Those who focus narrowly on the land, people and resources that will fall under Palestinian quasi-jurisdiction in the coming few years are surrendering before the real battle has even started. Those who view Palestine as a new means of access to foreign money, or a convenient new conduit for economic penetration of the vast Middle Eastern commercial market — holy smoke, Joe, do you realise how many bottles of Coca Cola we can sell to 230 million thirsty Arabs? — are signing the documents of surrender in the greater war that defines the world today: the war between, on the one hand, communities of caring people who would dare to develop humane societies based on enduring moral and cultural values and, on the other hand, corporate conglomerates run by faceless managers whose religious devotion to profiteering and market penetration means they recognise neither national boundaries nor cultural sensitivities.

In this context, Palestine is not only the name of a strip of land inhabited by people with a cultural identity that is only very slightly different from their adjacent brothers and sisters in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and other corners of historical Bilad Esh Sham, or Greater Syria; within the 20th century's struggle for the self-determination of peoples and the dignified development of sensible and decent statehood in the South, Palestine takes on a far larger meaning.

The idea of Palestine for most of this century has been the idea of struggling against the lingering historical injustices of European and then American contempt for the people of the South. Now that the Palestinians have earned the first tangible bits of political recognition from Israel and the world's powers, I believe that the idea of Palestine must be seen once again in its full historical context: it is the idea that we — we who are of and from this region, we Palestinians, Jordanians, Levantines, Syrians, Middle Easterners, Semites, Arabs, Muslims, Christians, Jews; choose any little label that you're comfortable with — we must build in Palestine a society that is a model of all that we believe in and stand for, a just and humane society that brings honour to who we are and what we represent, a society of which our parents and grandparents would be proud.

The opportunity to build new structures of Arab statehood is not one that comes very often. In most Arab countries, that opportunity has been largely wasted in the last century, bringing us to this moment in the closing years of the century when our region continues to be characterised by tension, extremism, militarism and the primitive, child-like political emotionalism of people seeking refuge in the warm and familiar chambers of their primordial identities of religion, family, tribe and other forms of reflexive, instinctive, non-rational and yet appealing, patriarchy. We hide under these protective wings because they are safe, they are available and they usually get us through the winter; some of the more politically crude amongst us also peek under the tiny tail feathers of narrow nationalism, that historical cheat that tries to replace our rich Arab/Islamic cultural identity with the fool's gold of our own little bit of geography.

Because we have ventured into this cruel world of nationalistic fantasy-states and regional fragility — dependent, fragmented, 'indebted, thirsty, intellectually provincial and increasing fearful of the truth that nudges us like the wind before a rainstorm — we continue to see our lands and our lives passed on like a baton from foreign emperor to emperor, and our fate mortgaged to the sad deficiencies of Arab and other

local governance systems and power structures that are more often than not silent partners and co-signatures with the emperors we bemoan. Our "disfigured post-colonial world", in Edward Said's words, is a reality that we suffer, but it is also a reality that we struggle to rectify and to replace with something better.

The mangled, distorted modern Middle East is all that is struggle of the last century is not to have been a brief hallucinatory diversion during our transition from geographical waystations on Europe's imperial routes last century, to geological and commercial pistons along the European-American-Pacific Rim race towards a perpetual global commercial jamboree this century. The opportunity to build a new society in Palestine on the wreckage of the old is a sacred trust that Palestinians hold in the name of all Arab people — and even beyond the confines of the Arab World.

This is an opportunity to close the sad chapter of colonial and imperial agony and of the South's staggering post-colonial stupor. This is an opportunity to affirm that the French colonialism of Algeria was wrong and that the Algerians' own autocratic self-colonisation was equally wrong. This is an opportunity to forge a more humane and rational model of statehood that is not fearful of its own people or so eccentrically possessive of bits of land that it forgets about the quality of life of the human beings who live on that land.

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These are large orders, perhaps impossible dreams. They are certainly unusual in the modern Middle East, but I am convinced that they are possible if the Palestinians — and the Arabs and Israelis next door — muster the vision that is necessary to transcend the temptations of the global dog food empire that beckons them into the enchanted forest of endless soft drinks and television entertainment; instead, we who are of and from this region, along with like-minded decent people throughout the rest of the world, should grasp the opportunity of the birth of Palestine to walk together on a very different path of humane national development.

Palestine may be one of the few chances available to the world to make this choice. A census, an election, yes and yes again; even an identity card, a library card, a driving license and then a passport for every Palestinian: how appropriate it would be if this opportunity for Palestinian rebirth were also to be an opportunity for a more global process of humanism and decency. It would be fitting indeed that the land that gave the world a model of monotheistic, codified morality in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions thousands of years ago would today provide the world with a fresh model of nationhood that is — like those religions — a beacon of how good we can be when we set our minds to it.

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M. KAHLIL



Russia changed for good after revolt

By Martin Nesiryk
Reuter

MOSCOW — A month after hardliners launched an abortive revolt against President Boris Yeltsin, Moscow's battle-blackened White House parliament is turning white again but Russia has changed.

Russia's first post-communist election is six weeks away, two dozen political groupings are campaigning. Mr. Yeltsin has tightened his grip on the huge federation's 88 diverse regions and republics and has decreed important economic reforms.

Even Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin could be evicted from his Red Square mausoleum, a communist shrine.

On Sunday, October 3 — four weeks ago — thousands of communist and nationalist supporters of the dissolved Soviet parliament surged through Moscow's streets and dozens died when they tried to storm the Ostankino television centre.

The next morning, Mr. Yelt-

sin replied by sending in tanks and troops to blast the White House defenders into submission. Dozens more died as shells pocked the building's imposing facade and fires scorched the upper floors.

Now foreign and Russian workers have cleaned almost all the riverside building's blackened areas with water jets and are on the way to repairing shattered windows and stonework.

Mr. Yeltsin is determined to return the building to its original state as soon as possible to remove the symbolic value of battle damage for his opponents, whose ringleaders are in jail awaiting trial on charges that carry a maximum 15-year prison sentence.

The president, eager to press on with reforms, has been as determined to capitalise on his strengthened position by ordering elections for new local councils. Some old-style Soviets (councils) have resisted his reforms.

To help bring the regions to heel, Mr. Yeltsin has also told them to pay taxes they owe or risk losing funds from Moscow.

As part of his attempt to sweep aside the vestiges of Bolshevik rule, he has called a referendum on a post-communist constitution for Dec. 12, the same day as the vote for the new two-chamber Russian legislature.

Russia will also gradually be getting a jury system to replace the communist-inspired and manipulative method of a judge and two lay assessors.

One of Mr. Yeltsin's most dramatic economic decrees has been to allow land to be bought and sold after 70 years of state ownership. But the economy remains in crisis, with double-digit monthly inflation and a huge budget deficit.

The government has also decided to do away with bread subsidies and ordered hundreds of loss-making state enterprises to pay off their debts or face bankruptcy.

Emergent political parties and election blocs offer differing views of alternatives to Mr. Yeltsin's policies. Party workers spent the weekend gathering the 100,000 signatures each grouping needs to be registered next month for the poll.

Some blocs say Mr. Yeltsin

supporters, primarily ministers and aides in the group Russia's choice, have an unfair advantage in media coverage ahead of the vote. Mr. Yeltsin has ordered a special court to be set up to try to ensure equal coverage and access.

While some diehard communists who wistfully dream of the old days have said they will boycott the vote and some fascist groups are banned, other communists and ardent nationalists plan to stand.

Many of Russia's 150 million people protest indifference toward the election so far and plenty of voters have yet to make up their minds about who to back.

Mr. Yeltsin may have changed Russia for good, but his vision of the future is at least partly inspired by Russia's past.

His only domestic trip outside Moscow since the uprising has been to the ancient town of Yaroslavl, where he vowed to emulate an 11th-century prince who gave Russia its first written law.

"Soviet power is over," he said. "We should be worthy heirs to our ancestors."

LETTERS

Matters of priority

To the Editor:

With regard to the letter "Deadly custom" (Jordan Times, Oct. 27, 1993) in which the author tackles the effects of cigarette smoke on our lives, I believe that it would be more pertinent to publish letters that address more pressing matters such as the daily pollution that we are all exposed to.

Or is no one interested?

Kamal M. Kattan,
Amman.

Satire not disloyalty

To the Editor:

I would only like to point out that the famous and great American comedian, Carol Burnett, performed a hilarious satire against secretaries a few years back. No one accused her of being sexist, nor anti-American at the time, nor did anyone mention the American Constitution or the Declaration of Independence as being under attack because of her show.

If I offended the Jordanian women, whom I deeply admire, respect and love, then I offer my most humble apologies; for those who know me well understand my feelings towards all citizens of our beloved Kingdom of Jordan. Many of my female friends are very well educated and a great asset to our country. Some of my friends are themselves secretaries. My column was never intended for them or for any other conscientious secretary, of which there are many, I am sure. But too, there are a great deal of secretaries who tend to get on many people's nerves, including myself and quite a few of my acquaintances; hence, the story about Myrtle the Turtle in my article "The infamous secretary" (Jordan Times, Oct. 21-22, 1993).

But then making fun of a weakness that exists within society has nothing to do with our National Charter, our national policy or Jordanian women in general and/or their education. I therefore fail to make the connection between all the above and what I said in my column. If only Ms. Hadidi, who is entitled to her opinions, could be more open minded, then perhaps after bravely "wading through" my infuriating column, she could have laughed (my main intention), instead of rushing to the defence of the future of the nation which does not seem to have been at stake at all.

If criticising a social institution which might even be a universal problem, makes a writer bear the label unpatriotic or disloyal to his or her country, then we had better take a sharp look at ourselves. Excessive praise of ourselves and putting on the shoulder all the time gets us nowhere at all.

E. Yaghi,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.



Third District — acid test

(Continued from page 1)

Jordan Times contend that if one of the female candidates withdrew in favour of the other, "a woman will definitely win in this district." Some say Ms. Mutti has a greater chance of winning because "she enjoys the support of the majority of the Circassian community."

The race for the Christian seat will be a tough challenge. Much wheeling and dealing has gone into it, simply because many Christians are more interested in who will win the Muslim seats.

The Christian community in this district does care about who among its members will be elected, but the Christian voters are equally concerned about improving the chances of those Muslim candidates closest to them, namely Messrs Nabulsi, Abu Ragheb and Masri. Where many Christians will forego casting any ballot for a co-religionist in favour of voting for liberal Muslims, some Muslim voters will likewise support Christian candidates. This is where the battle will actually be decided, according to observers. For instance, the communist apparatchiks, whether Christian or Muslim, will vote for candidate Yacoub Zayadin, secretary-general of the Jordanian

The 1993 elections campaign, serious as it appears, is not devoid of a light — sometimes funny — side. These are nibbles about news, views and comments about the campaign that will appear (hopefully) every day in this corner until it is all over on Nov. 8. Humour is intended in the column, in no way libel.

THE ISLAMIC Action Front (IAF), in a bid to ensure maximum utilisation of the tribal base of its candidates, has apparently asked its committed members to vote after 2:00 p.m. on polling day. The idea being that its representa-

tives at the voting booths would be able to give a rough estimate of voting patterns before the IAF decides how many more votes their candidate would need in order to win. This is particularly important for them in areas where they have more than one candidate running since the waiting period would give them enough time to split the remaining vote. The catch is that some other campaign managers are already aware of the trick and asking their committed voters to wait also till after 2:00 p.m. to do essentially the same thing. With this being the case, independent voters would be

well-advised to vote before that time to avoid the voting rush, a pundit says.

WHILE IAF policy in tribal areas is one thing, its strategy in urban districts is totally another. In the latter areas, Islamist volunteers have been visiting homes and handing out voter cards along with the names of the candidate they should vote for. To keep their mathematics easy, the IAF is requesting women supporters to vote for one candidate and the men to vote for the other. So if in the end result one of the IAF candidates seems to have a higher turnout than his colleague, it would be due, presumably, to the male-female ratio, which is about 53 to 47 respectively, and not because one is less popular with the

women than the other.

THE LEFTIST-ISMAMIST alliance may still influence the 1993 elections despite the change in the electoral system to one-person, one-vote.

The main theory behind the government introducing change is to guard against vote bartering in the one district and end unlikely alliances which contributed to the strong Islamist showing in the last Parliament. But it appears that the leftists, who have so far failed to get their act together, have found a way to barter votes with the Islamists anyway. In one case, according to some sources, a leftist party in the Third District has accepted an offer from the IAF to support a friend of the front in that district and receive in

readers. And to better serve democracy, the writer suggests, "the identity proof should be stamped after the voter had cast his vote."

"There should be a series of decisive steps that accompany this decision," he went on. But having said that about Al Ra'i, we should add that a campaigner for one of the candidates was especially troubled about the extra requirements of the Ministry of Interior "because I had the cards of about 20 dead people which I was going to use on the day of the elections." So the Ministry of Interior's measures might be democratic after all, and Al Ra'i even more so.

NERMEEN MURAD

Attacker worked in New York mosque

(Continued from page 1)

Israel.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Mrs. Hajat as condemning the attack that her husband perpetrated as a heinous crime.

"Is this jihad (holy war) he was talking about... does jihad mean Muslim's killing to his brother Muslim?" she asked.

Mrs. Hajat expressed dissatisfaction over her husband's crime, which she attributed to "the religious extremism that has blinded him."

In an interview with Petra, Mrs. Hajat recollects the recent events that had probably led to her husband's role in the attack.

She said that her husband, 29, had left for the United States in 1991 "in a suspicious manner," and was working as an assistant to an imam of the Al Farouk mosque.

Mrs. Hajat, who said she got married to him in August 1993 after being engaged for four years, said that "signs of extremism" appeared in her husband's letters the following year to his stay in the U.S.

Last hostage released

(Continued from page 1)

bellion.

More than 2,000 people have died since the government cancelled January 1992 elections the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was about to win amid voter discontent with corruption and mismanagement of a sinking economy.

The targeting of foreigners, the newest tactic in the insurgency, could undermine a vital petroleum industry dependent on foreign expertise and capital.

Some 3,000 French expatriates returned home over the weekend for the All Saints Holiday, and several companies have either increased security or begun to send some employees home.

Three agents of France's counterespionage agency, the DST, were reported to have visited Algiers this week to improve security for the 24,000-strong French community, among about 60,000 foreigners in the country.

Rabah Kebir, president of the front's executive directorate in exile, said that if he were Spanish or French, he would leave Algeria.

"I'd get out of there, not out of fear of the Algerian people, but for moral reasons, so as not to keep the military junta in power," said Mr. Kebir, quoted in Monday's edition of the leading Spanish newspaper El País.

"He came back last summer with \$4,000 in his pocket... I began to have doubts because he was constantly talking about jihad," she said. "If I knew about my husband's intentions, I would have reported it to the concerned authorities immediately."

Mrs. Hajat said that her husband used to constantly listen to tapes of Abdullab Azzam, a Muslim Brotherhood's leader who was killed in Afghanistan in 1989. She also said that he used to receive phone calls at 2 a.m., most of which she believes, were from America.

"I was not able to understand what he was saying because of the utmost secrecy he adopted," she said.

Mrs. Wardah Nimir Rahhal, wife of Hussein Mohammad Ali, a Jordanian soldier killed in Friday's attack, showed pride of "the heroic act" of her husband to defend "dear Jordan," Petra said.

She said that His Majesty King Hussein's visit to the bereaved family had "alleviated our pains and had left the best of impressions in us."

Israel tables pullout plan

(Continued from page 1) to be negotiated at the Taba talks.

Jamil Tarifi, a senior Palestinian delegate to the Taba talks, said he held the Israeli government responsible for settlers' attacks on Palestinians.

"It is the responsibility of the Israeli government to keep them away from our people because they are protesting, they are destroying and hurting and nobody can take the law between their own hands," Dr. Tarifi said.

Under the peace deal, the army pullout is due to be completed in both Jericho and Gaza by April.

Israel wants to confine West Bank self-rule to Jericho in the initial stage. It wants troops to guard Jewish settlements in the teeming Gaza Strip, where Arabs outnumber Jews by about 250 to one.

Palestinians want an expanded self-rule area around Jericho and eventual removal of the Gaza settlements.

For the Palestinians in the Taba talks, Colonel Nasser Yusef said a plan for a withdrawal from all the Gaza Strip" was put forward and would be examined.

Mr. Gluska said withdrawal from the Jericho region, which has also been granted autonomy, would take place at a later date. The exact area for autonomy in the West Bank town still has to be defined.

The two delegations also discussed in a sub-committee the handover of authority to the

Palestinians, concentrating on financial and religious questions, said Dr. Tarifi.

"We did not see disagreement today," he said.

The two sides have until Dec. 13 to hammer out a deal on withdrawal and transfer of power for health, education, tourism, direct taxation and social welfare.

The setting up of a Palestinian police force and prisoner releases are also on the agenda at this fourth session of negotiations which started at this Red Sea resort on Oct. 13, the same day as the autonomy agreement came into effect.

Palestinian leaders have called for a police and security force up to 30,000 strong, but Israel envisages only about 10,000 men.

The two sides are even further apart on the issue of prisoner releases. The Palestinians want a general amnesty for the 11,000 still in jail. Israel freed 617 inmates last week but has tied further releases to progress in the negotiations and has ruled out freeing those who have committed "blood crimes."

Palestinian prisoners in two Israeli jails have pledged to go on hunger strike unless they are freed "very soon," a senior Palestinian source said.

The inmates pledged in a letter to Ali Jade, an aide of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leader George Habbash, that they would "launch a hunger strike, including refusing to drink, if they are not freed very soon."

Settlers continue rampage

(Continued from page 11)

Israeli officials suggested last week that under the autonomy deal settlements near major Palestinian centres of population could be dismantled.

Every day since Friday's killing of Beit El resident Haim Mizrahi, settlers have blocked roads with burning tyres and stoned Arab-owned cars and houses.

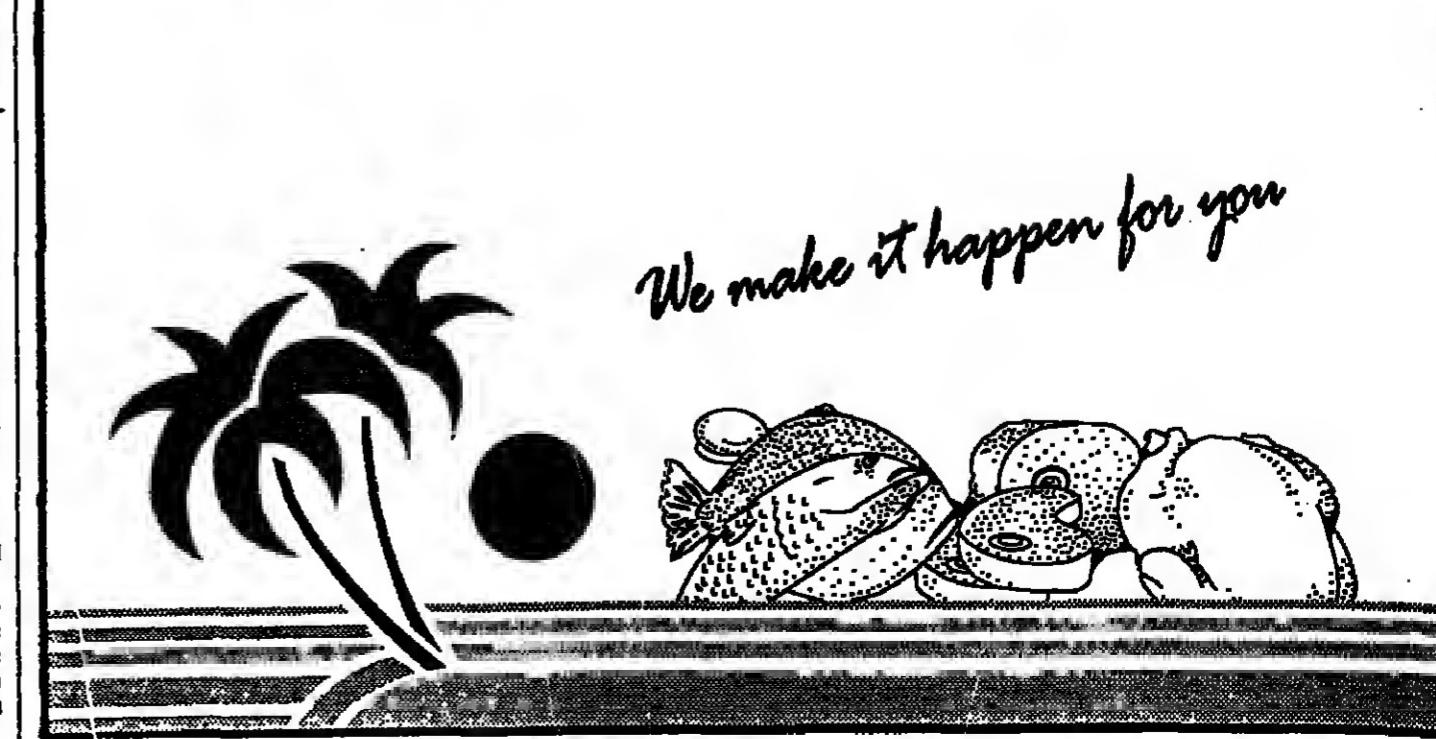
In another sign of defiance, eight settler families moved into homes in the settlement as squatters Monday.

The homes, like some 1,500 elsewhere in the West Bank, were begun during the construction boom under the previous right-wing government



Less affluent candidates use makeshift stores to hang their photos, like in the Bedouin Al Janoub District (left), or make their platform known on solid brick walls, like in Ma'an (Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

**GIFTS
FROM
THE
SEA...
& THE
MARKET, TOO!**



Iran devalues currency by nearly 2.5%

NICOSIA (R) — Iran devalued the rial by 2.46 per cent against the dollar Monday, days after the currency hit six-month lows on the open market.

The central bank posted the dollar at 1,623/1,625 rials, compared with 1,583/1,585, a rate it had kept since July 25. The rates of other major currencies were changed similarly.

The devaluation followed decisions Saturday by the foreign exchange regulatory committee headed by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani tightening import controls.

Mansour Farhoudi, a money dealer in Tehran, said the dollar was gaining in a confused market, reaching 1,652 rials in early afternoon after opening at 1,640.

The dollar was also rising in the rival market in Europe, where it has a premium of about 50 rials over the Tehran rate because transactions arranged abroad bypass the months-long delays normal in payments handled by Iranian banks.

"I bought dollars at 1,660 rials yesterday, but today can't find any at 1,690. It is very likely to go even higher," said Ali Pakpour, an Iranian money dealer in London.

There was no official statement on the devaluation, the first since April, which contrasted with repeated statements by central bank governor Mohamad Hossein Adeli that the fundamentals of Iran's economy supported a stronger rial.

Iran is dependent on crude oil exports for more than 80 per cent of its hard cash revenue and oil prices have been declining in recent weeks despite an output cut agreed by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries in September.

The regulatory committee decided Saturday that all imports should be registered through the commerce ministry.

It also ordered government affiliated enterprises not to go to the open market for their hard cash needs and said that state banks would provide all they want.

"I don't think they can deliver on this. Bank drafts issued three or four months ago are still not paid," Mr. Farhoudi said.

Iran has been facing a cash shortage since last year, forcing delays in foreign payments which have disrupted trade and created supply problems for import dependent industries.

Failure of Muramoto Construction Company marks biggest post-war bankruptcy in Japan

TOKYO (AFP) — A respected Japanese building company has become the latest victim of Japan's bubble economy, declaring its insolvency with liabilities estimated at 590 billion yen (\$5.6 billion).

The failure of Muramoto Construction Co. Ltd., which filed for protection against creditors in the ancient capital of Nara Monday, marks the biggest bankruptcy in Japan's post-war history, surpassing the collapse of Sanko Steamship Co. in 1985 with liabilities of \$20 billion yen.

Like many other construction and real-estate companies which got caught up in the speculative mania of the late 1980s, Muramoto got burned by golf-course development despite its 85 years experience in the building industry.

Several of its banks, includ-

ing Osaka-based Daiwa Bank Ltd., had reported been trying to rehabilitate the troubled company — which employs some 2,000 people and has 150 offices across Japan.

But Muramoto was forced to seek protection from Nara district court after creditors threatened to seize part of its headquarters, put up as a guarantee for a golf course development in Chiba prefecture east of Tokyo.

Teikoku Data Bank Ltd., a credit research company, blamed the insolvency on the company's aggressive golf-course development and the bankruptcies of real-estate companies involved in various joint projects.

"In the process of expanding from public works projects to the private sector, construction related to golf courses ex-

panded sharply and contributed to increased profits. However, there were difficulties in buying land and delays in obtaining permits," Teikoku said in a statement.

Muramoto's liabilities are sizeable — representing 20 per cent of the liabilities of all 6,913 companies which went bankrupt in Japan in the six months to September. But analysts said the exposures to the company were fairly evenly spread among creditors and unlikely to trigger a major domino effect.

Muramoto was incorporated in its current structure in 1956, although it traces its beginnings back to 1908.

Now ranked as Japan's 24th-largest construction company, its net profit fell from 2.5 billion yen a year earlier to 1.7 billion yen in the year to June

1992, while revenue grew from 279 billion to 302 billion yen. Private-sector contracts accounted for about three-quarters of its revenue with public works absorbing the rest, while building activities accounted for about 70 per cent of all revenue. Civil engineering in such areas as highway interchanges and golf-course development accounted for about 30 per cent.

Muramoto was capitalised at 2.4 billion yen and had total assets of 429 billion yen in June 1992, when bank borrowings were not enough to fill reserves for 228 billion yen.

The company's biggest shareholder is its president, Toyotsugu Muramoto, who held almost 19 per cent of all shares in 1992. Other family members held most of the other shares.

Saudi crown prince urges prudent water, power use

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz launched an appeal Sunday for prudent use of water and electricity in the kingdom.

In a speech to university officials, he also denounced media reports of a cash crisis in the kingdom, the top world oil exporter.

"You know that water resources in our country are scarce. We don't have rivers," the prince said, adding that sparse rainfall in the kingdom was not enough to fill reservoirs for irrigation and general

consumption.

"Also, the increasing consumption of electricity in industry and in general use dictates on us to cooperate together to use it within the limits of our needs," he said.

The official Saudi Press Agency said the crown prince was addressing visiting officials of the King Saud University.

Saudi Arabia has awarded several contracts to build desalination and power plants to meet the increasing demand for water and electricity. Industry sources estimate the kingdom currently produces

around 70 per cent of its daily requirements of drinking water.

The crown prince attacked Western media reports that the kingdom had financial difficulties and was going bankrupt. "They speak a lot about Saudi Arabia's wealth and income and then we hear the contrast about it almost losing its cash reserves and that it is going bankrupt... this only comes from sick hearts... that speak with no knowledge of the truth and are only motivated by their deep hatred of our country," he said.

IDA gives Vietnam \$225m credits

HANOI (R) — The World Bank Monday gave Vietnam two credits totalling \$225.5 million and the bank's vice-president said it planned to pump \$1 billion into the country in the next three years.

Signature of agreements for the credits — \$70 million for primary education and \$158.5 million to upgrade the main north-south highway — completed Vietnam's reintegration into the international financial community following Washington's decision to stop blocking such loans.

The bank planned to finance other projects in Vietnam, he told a news conference. "We are doing some tentative planning around the figure of \$1 billion over the next three years," he said.

"That's not a ceiling, nor a floor..." he added. "The spe-

cific amount will depend on a number of factors — most importantly, Vietnam's ability to absorb. This would call for discipline on the part of Vietnam and of donors."

At a donor conference in Paris next week, Vietnam will seek commitments from governments and international agencies for \$7 billion to \$8 billion in aid by the year 2000.

Mr. Kaji said the World Bank was planning a loan to Vietnam for agriculture and was contemplating structural adjustment-type credits for the future. It hoped to start talks soon on a three-year "rolling programme" of credits.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY NOVEMBER 2, 1993

By Thomas S Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You will be needing to decide many issues today other than election outcomes. Changes in group activities and personal relationships are also indicated so don't make any promises that you don't intend to keep.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Now you find you are benefiting by extending your activities beyond their present scope and you could make some very interesting new associations.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can do those things now which improve the appearance and value of your property as well as go after a raise in pay for any work performed.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have had it in your power now to go after your personal goals with vim, vigor and vitality and when they are almost certain to be yours soon.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have some private ambitions which require you pursue in a most cheerful and optimistic manner if they are to be a part of your daily existence.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 18) A great day for you to express that gregariousness which is so a part of your nature and character so get in the touch with friends. Arrange to see them.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) The outside world is your oyster now so do whatever civic, credit or career interests affect you there and get them quietly arranged as you wish.

to these reforms to create a better investment climate in the Arab region," he said.

The corporation said in July that private inter-Arab investment rose to \$483 million in 1992 from \$227 million in 1987.

It said total private Arab investment outside the Arab World between 1950 and 1992 stood at \$670 billion, compared with \$11.9 billion within the Arab World.

"Great hopes are attached

3.9 billion francs of French credits, which is 65 per cent of total credits while there are still two months to run this year," it said in a statement by the official news agency APS.

"Some of the credits making up this six billion franc package are subject to very difficult conditions and procedures which makes using them very slow," it added.

Foreign diplomats and economists in Turkmenistan said the manat has a better chance of success than other currencies.

Around \$300 million has been set aside from Turkmenistan's hard currency reserves to back its value.

Officials said a trade surplus with non-Commonwealth of Independent States countries — which totalled \$590 million in 1991 — would ensure demand for manat.

China's record and video companies are paying great attention to the protection of phonographic copyrights in both domestic and international terms," he said at a meeting of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, an anti-piracy watchdog.

China Record Co., the country's largest, has joined the federation and others are expected to follow, Mr. Liu said.

Western and Japanese music firms have begun complaining about an alarming rise in the quantity and quality of bootleg recordings made in China.

They say the problem has not been addressed adequately by Beijing

Arabs invest \$56 outside the Arab World for every dollar they invest home

DUBAI (R) — Inter-Arab investment is increasing but Arabs still place more funds outside the Arab World, speakers at an investment conference in Dubai said Monday.

"Presently \$56 are invested by Arabs outside the Arab countries against each dollar invested in the Arab countries," said Maamoun Ibrahim Hassan, director general of the Kuwait-based Inter-Arab In-

vestment Guarantee Corporation.

The three-day conference,

organised by the corporation, is attended by Arab investment officials as well as officials from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

The cooperation, owned by 21 Arab states, insures Arab investors against political risk,

promotes inter-Arab investment and researches investment flows.

"The majority of the Arab countries nowadays are witnessing structural economic reforms. These reforms include many sectors, production, trade, financial, monetary and capital markets," Mr. Hassan said.

"Great hopes are attached

Algeria expects \$10.5b oil, gas earnings

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria expects to earn \$10.5 billion from oil and gas exports this year compared with \$12 billion forecast by the previous government.

Last month, Prime Minister Redha Malek warned that the country's debt-burdened economy could worsen in 1994.

He said the last government had based forecasts on oil fetching \$20 or \$21 a barrel while the price in October was

\$18. "The drop in the price of a barrel reduces these returns to \$10 billion from \$12 at the moment when (debt) repayments Algeria must make are around \$9 billion," Mr. Malek said.

The ministry rejected suggestions that Algeria was not taking up French credits worth six billion francs (just over \$1 billion).

In the first 10 months of 1993, Algeria had mobilised

manat notes, printed in London, bear a portrait of President Saparmurat Niyazov, chief of the Turkmen."

Mr. Niyazov, an ex-communist leader, has become the focus of a burgeoning personality cult.

People on the streets of the capital, Ashgabat, reacted in different ways to the new banknotes, limited amounts of which can be bought at banks at the rate of 500 rubles to one manat.

"My child is sick at home and I have no bread," she said as she stood in the shop's doorway, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Several of the countries to emerge from the former Soviet Union have dumped the ruble in favour of a colourful array of new banknotes. But only the Estonian kroon is fully convertible.

The first Central Asian na-

manat would soon be worth more than the dollar.

But an ethnic Russian housewife, Ludmilla, burst into tears. She had not managed to change any rubles for manat because of queues at the bank. The bread shop, obeying regulations, was accepting only manat.

"I have no bread," she said as she stood in the shop's doorway, tears streaming down her cheeks.

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The first Central Asian na-

Turkmenistan brings in new manat currency

ASHGABAT (R) — The former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan Monday banned the Soviet-era ruble and launched a bright new currency to take its place.

The government hopes the manat currency will reinforce the gas-rich Central Asian state's two-year-old independence, allowing it to dictate its own economic policies and declare war on inflation.

"We congratulate our people on the introduction of the national currency," read a banner headline in the official Turkmenskaya Iskra.

The rest of the newspaper was given over to descriptions of the 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, five and one manat notes.

All but the five and one

manat notes, printed in London, bear a portrait of President Saparmurat Niyazov, chief of the Turkmen."

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The first Central Asian na-

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"Washing dishes is fun if you pretend you're Godzilla and the forks are submarines..."

JUMBLE

by Hentz Arnold

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to

Haiti right-wing parties fail to form government

PONT-AU-PRINCE (R) — Haiti's small right-wing parties called Sunday for new elections, but their bid for power fizzled amid disagreement over who should replace exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Boosted by the failure of the U.N. plan to return Mr. Aristide to power, a dozen right-wing parties held a round of talks in a bid to seize power and form a new government. The talks ended with no consensus on who should rule or how that rule should be implemented, party leaders backed off of their earlier bravado and issued a declaration made up only of vague demands.

The groups, many of which revere the memory of the late dictator Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, demanded parliament invoke Article 149 of the constitution which calls for new elections and for the head of the Supreme Court on another leading jurist to take over as interim president.

"We demand the immediate application of Article 149 for the formation of a government of national unity," said Emmanuel Constant, head of the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), widely accused of organising the feared militia known as "attaches."

U.S. and U.N. diplomats have warned any constitutional coup d'état would be met by stern sanctions than the oil and arms embargo imposed two weeks ago.

Parliament was not scheduled to meet Monday, a holiday in Haiti.

The rightists justify their bid for power by saying Mr. Aristide lost all credibility from midnight Saturday, the dead-

line for his homecoming under the terms of a U.N.-brokered agreement signed on July 3 on New York's Governor's Island by the exiled leader and Haiti's army chief, Lieutenant-General Raoul Cedras.

"Governor's Island is absolutely dead," Mr. Constant said.

A declaration issued by the parties after the meetings, called for new elections within 90 days and urged all political parties — including Mr. Aristide's — to join in a consensus government.

The parties called for the resignation of Mr. Aristide and Prime Minister Robert Malval. It said Mr. Cedras had served "with dignity and honour" but also called for his resignation.

Gen. Cedras so far has refused to carry through his promise to resign under the terms of the U.N. accord, saying he will not quit until the parliament approves an amnesty for those involved in the bloody September 1991 coup that toppled Mr. Aristide, and acts of political repression since.

Eric Falt, a U.N. spokesman, dismissed the rightists' proposals as unimportant. "The only importance they have is given to them by the media," he said.

Mr. Constant has proposed inviting General Colin Powell, the recently retired chairman of the Peacock's Joint Chiefs of Staff, to mediate.

"Powell is an honest guy, a well-known person and very experienced. He has credibility," Mr. Constant told Reuters. "We would obviously be dealing with military matters so he would be very useful."

Vladimir Jeanty, a priest and Aristide critic who leads the Haitian Party of God, predicted new sanctions would

have little effect.

"We are going to let the U.N. do what it has the power to do. We are going to say, 'if you want to kill us, kill us. If you want to invade, invade.'

We want everybody to know... that Aristide is a crazy man. We will just ask parliament to go ahead and establish who should be president," Fr. Jean-

Other plotters were more radical. Reynold Georges, leader of the Alliance for the Liberation and Advancement of Haiti, warned that Mr. Malval, and U.N. special envoy Dante Caputo were best advised not to resist the right-wingers' power grab.

Meanwhile the New York Times reported Monday that key members of the military regime controlling Haiti and blocking the return of Mr. Aristide were paid informants working for the CIA.

The newspaper, quoting American officials, said the CIA, as part of its intelligence-gathering operations in Haiti, cultivated, recruited and paid generals and politicians.

This practice occurred from the mid-1980s at least until the 1991 coup that forced Mr. Aristide from power, the paper said, with the intelligence agency paying for information about everything from cocaine smuggling to political ferment.

It said that a government official familiar with the practice did not name names, but said that "several of the principal players in the present situation were compensated by the U.S. government."

The practice occurred from the mid-1980s at least until the 1991 coup that forced Mr. Aristide from power, the paper said, with the intelligence agency paying for information about everything from cocaine smuggling to political ferment.

Eric Falt, a U.N. spokesman, dismissed the rightists' proposals as unimportant. "The only importance they have is given to them by the media," he said.

Mr. Constant has proposed inviting General Colin Powell, the recently retired chairman of the Peacock's Joint Chiefs of Staff, to mediate.

"Powell is an honest guy, a well-known person and very experienced. He has credibility," Mr. Constant told Reuters. "We would obviously be dealing with military matters so he would be very useful."

Vladimir Jeanty, a priest and Aristide critic who leads the Haitian Party of God, predicted new sanctions would



A demonstrator points to the photograph of Haiti's former dictator Francois Duvalier during an anti-Aristide rally held outside the government palace in Port Au Prince, Haiti. (AFP photo)

Maastricht Treaty quietly implemented

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Community's (EC) treaty to European union came quietly into effect Monday, without any of the fireworks that marked its rocky passage.

The Maastricht Treaty on closer European union was implemented after nearly two years of bitter squabbling which deeply divided the 12-member bloc. However, there was no fanfare at the EC's sprawling headquarters in Brussels where employees were given the day off to mark All Saints Day.

Despite its low-key entry, the treaty marks a new era for the EC, effectively establishing a new "European citizenship" for the region's inhabitants.

It also provides the EC with the ambitious new goals of creating a single currency by the end of the century and forcing common foreign and security policies.

Belgium, current holder of the EC's six-month rotating presidency, hailed the implementation of the treaty.

Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene told Bel-

gian radio the treaty would enable EC nations to act more effectively on issues such as security and drug trafficking.

"The treaty provides Europe with supplementary measures... this should allow us to attack problems on an international level together," Mr. Dehaene said.

A string of new EC institutions will be created under the new plan, including a future EC central bank, the European Monetary Institute, which will be based in Frank-

turt.

Burundi army rejects foreign troops

BUJUMBURA (R) — Burundi's army Monday rejected plans to deploy foreign troops in the Central African state, 11 days after toppling the elected government and killing President Melchior Ndayave and six ministers.

The Burundi army totally rejects any attempts to deploy foreign troops anywhere in the country. This is against our laws, against Burundi's common good," army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Bosco Daradangwa told Reuters in an interview.

Remnants of Mr. Ndayave's government, led by Prime

Minister Sylvie Kinigi, have been holed up at the French embassy in the capital since the Oct. 21 coup. They say they will only come out of hiding if an estimated 1,000 foreign troops are deployed in the country to give them security.

"We (the military) cannot understand what the government means by calling for foreign protection. The Burundi army is capable of securing the lives of its leaders," Col. Daradangwa said.

Planes carrying foreign troops or military cargo would not be allowed to land in the capital Bujumbura, he added.

Col. Daradangwa said the army was angry that some of 20 French military advisers had moved to the French embassy as an initial protection force for Ms. Kinigi and her government.

Tribal violence, triggered by the coup and in which witnesses say several thousand people have died, has swept Burundi, although Ms. Kinigi's government says it has taken charge.

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Indian opposition steps up pressure on government over Kashmir siege

SRINAGAR, India (Agencies) — A leader of India's main opposition party urged the government Monday to quickly resolve the 17-day-old army siege of the Hazratbal Mosque, but no settlement to the standoff appeared in sight.

The Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley remained paralysed by a general strike called by Muslim separatist groups to protest the Indian army's sieging of the holiest Islamic shrine in the strife-torn northern state.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, parliamentary leader of the Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian People's Party), demanded that the government take "strong action" against the 50 armed Muslim militants holed up in the mosque.

Negotiations aimed at ending the crisis collapsed over the weekend after Kashmiri Muslim leaders serving as mediators between the Kashmir government and the rebels pulled out.

The Indian army wants the militants to give themselves up. The gunmen have refused to surrender and insist on safe passage to end the stalemate since Oct. 15.

which has triggered bloody street protests in Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the son of the maharaja who merged his kingdom of Kashmir with India 46 years ago urged India and Pakistan Monday to negotiate a settlement over the still-disputed territory.

There is a dangerous situation in the valley and it needs urgent attention. There could be another India-Pakistan war if the problem isn't solved immediately," said Karan Singh.

Departing from Indian policy, Mr. Singh called for multi-lateral talks among India, Pakistan and Kashmiri from both sides of the ceasefire line dividing the Himalayan land.

He also urged India to show "utmost patience and restraint" in dealing with separatist militants holding Kashmir's holiest shrine, the Hazratbal Mosque.

The Indian army wants the militants to give themselves up. The gunmen have refused to surrender and insist on safe passage to end the stalemate since Oct. 15.

U.K., Ireland vow to pursue Ulster peace process

LONDON (AFP) — Britain and Ireland appeared intent Monday on pursuing new peace initiatives in Northern Ireland, despite a weekend massacre that capped the bloodiest week in decades in the violence-torn province.

Prime Minister John Major of Britain and Albert Reynolds of Ireland vowed late Sunday not to be deflected from the incipient peace process by the machinegun attack on a Catholic pub Saturday night that left seven dead and 11 wounded.

The Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) claimed the attack to be continuing reprisal for an Irish Republican Army (IRA) bomb that killed 10 in a Belfast a week earlier. In all, 23 were killed in eight days.

Mr. Major condemned the pub attack in the community of Greysteel northwest of Londonderry, as "yet another act of evil butchery."

Mr. Reynolds said that as far as the peace process was concerned, "nothing has changed."

Mr. Major's office also indicated the premier's door was open to John Hume, leader of Ulster's moderate, mainly Catholic Social Democratic

and Labour Party (SDLP), who need only request a meeting.

Mr. Hume had held months of secret talks with Gerry Adams, leader of the Irish Republican Army's political wing, Sinn Fein, and the two devised a peace proposal, not yet made public, which is said to be under consideration in London and Dublin.

Until now, Mr. Major had given the strong impression he wanted nothing to do with any peace formula involving Mr. Adams, whose IRA links were underlined when he acted as a pall-bearer at the mid-week funeral of the IRA bomber killed by his own device in Belfast Oct. 23.

"Although we have not received any formal request, the prime minister has made it repeatedly clear that his door is always open to leaders of all the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland," said Mr. Major's office.

"Unionist politicians should do it as a matter of urgency," said Seamus Mallon, deputy SDLP leader. "If they haven't got the courage to do that, then I and my party are prepared to do it."

"Nationalist leaders believe nationalists could also stop the killings if they opened their doors to the UFF and the Ulster Volunteer Force."

But one East Belfast Democratic Unionist MP said he opposed any dialogue with the

ICRC appeals to Bosnian fighters

SARAJEVO (R) — The International Red Cross (ICRC) Monday appealed to Croats and Muslim forces to honour the rules of war and spare civilians caught up in fierce fighting in central Bosnia.

It reported devastation and chaos in the mainly-Croat Vares area where thousands of refugees, most of them Muslims, were fleeing for their lives.

The Muslim-led Bosnian government army told U.N. peacekeepers its units shot dead 19 Croat soldiers who tried to escape after being captured in fighting around Bugojno 60 kilometres west of Vares.

The Red Cross statement in Sarajevo said: "The situation in Vares appears chaotic. Thousands of civilians have been forced to flee from their homes... they are fleeing looting, death threats, mistreatment and are desperately searching for protection."

ICRC officials on the spot noted repeated allegations of civilians and prisoners being summarily executed during and after the fighting.

They urged the Bosnian army and forces of the Croat Defence Council (HVO) to end blatant violations of humanitarian law and "respect the civilian population, the wounded and the detainees."

Bill Aikman, a spokesman for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia, said attacking government troops advanced 1,000 metres into the Vares pocket at the weekend and captured the village of Dubostica.

Some 200 Croat villagers took refuge in Vares town nine kilometres to the south.

Vares straddles a main supply route linking the Muslim strongholds of Tuzla in east Bosnia and Zenica to the west.

The killing of the Croat prisoners of war near Bugojno was investigated by British U.N. units Sunday after reports that 22 Croat soldiers had been captured.

Col. Aikman said the British were not allowed to enter Bugojno but were told by the Muslims that 19 had been shot in a mass escape attempt.

"The patrol then demanded to see the other three and were told this was not possible," he added. "We have no information beyond that other than the fact that something serious has happened."

UNPROFOR reopened Sarajevo Airport to relief flights after halting the air bridge Sunday because of an attack in which a French officer was wounded by gunfire.

Col. Aikman told reporters that peacekeepers thought it was safe to resume operations which are a vital lifeline for the 380,000 population of the city under Serb siege for 19 months.

The U.N. has been alarmed by a resurgence in fighting on Sunday around the Muslim settlement of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia.

Col. Aikman said Serbs hit the enclave, designated a U.N. safe area, with artillery fire and that the Muslim launched mortars.

"This means that someone has mortars inside the pocket, not very many, but someone from the Bosnian army side has them," he added.

Fungus may help end ancient plague

Jihad threatens to kill Egyptian military judges

CAIRO (Agencies) — A Muslim extremist group on Monday threatened to kill eight military judges to avenge death sentences against fellow radicals. The threat came two days after the latest bombings were ordered by military courts.

It was made in a statement sent to an international news agency in Cairo and signed by the Jihad (Holy War), the group that assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

The statement listed by name the eight judges it was threatening. All have banded down death sentences against the Vanguards of Conquest, an offshoot of Jihad or the Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah.

Both groups say their spiritual leader is Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, who is on trial in the United States for allegedly plotting the bombing of the World Trade Centre and attacks on other New York landmarks.

The Jihad statement said the judges are "sinners who should be killed." It said the group was sending a religious edict telling its followers to "spill the blood of all the criminal officers whose names were mentioned."

Meanwhile, suspected Muslim extremists shot and killed a police agent Monday near Assiut, a militant stronghold 320 kilometres south of Cairo.

The victim, Mohammad Kathout, was gunned down as he headed for the police station in the town of Al Badari.

It was the second slaying since death sentences were issued Saturday against eight Vanguards members on charges of killing two men and stealing their weapons to carry out the extremist campaign to topple Egypt's sectarian government.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility in Monday's slaying. But witnesses said that the assailants who killed a policeman on Saturday shouted slogans about aveng-

ing the death sentences.

Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfifi, meanwhile, raised the number of top-level security officials in southern Egypt in an attempt to head off further attacks.

"The police force is strong and able," General Alfifi said in a meeting with ministry officials, adding that the "battle against terrorists may continue for a long time."

Military courts sentenced eight Muslim militants to death and another 92 to jail terms over the weekend in the latest in a year-long series of trials. The courts have sentenced a total of 38 militants to death for attacking security officers and tourists.

The most recent trials were of 248 suspects accused of trying to restart the Jihad group under the name of Vanguard of Conquest.

"The Islamic Jihad offers its condolences to the Egyptian people and Islamic Nation on the death sentences and prison terms of the case of the Vanguards, asserting that these young men were sentenced for carrying out their bold struggle in the path of God and to establish an Islamic state in Egypt and free it from American and Jewish imperialism," Monday's statement said.

"Islamic scholars are agreed that whoever abandons the rule of God... is an infidel that should be killed. The culprits have shed the blood of our Muslim struggles by convicting them to death."

The statement was the latest sign Egypt's armed forces are slowly being drawn into the government's 18-month struggle with the militants.

It named five generals, a brigadier, a colonel and a lieutenant-colonel who served on the three-man panels that judged the militants in trials fundamentalist lawyers and human rights activists have criticised for lack of proper procedure.

Gen. Nahas said several fundamentalist leaders were forced to leave Pakistani and Afghan territory following "coordination" between the Egyptian and Pakistani authorities.

Party seeking confederation with Jordan formed in East Jerusalem

By Said Ghazali
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — A Palestinian activist and a veteran journalist announced Monday that they were establishing a new political party to lobby for a confederation between Jordan and the Palestinians.

"Our wish is to have one government for the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Jordan. Palestinians are the majority there and Jordan has interests here," activist Mohammad Sobeih told a press conference.

The new party, called the Palestinian-Jordanian Beit Al Magid (Jerusalem) Movement, would also serve as a private conduit for Arab aid during the autonomy period to start in December.

"We have positive promises from various Arab countries including Gulf states to finance a new hospital and a university," said Mr. Sobeih.

He said the group had raised pledges of \$12 million so far. The Gulf states have

resisted giving any money directly to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) or to Jordan since the 1991 Gulf war, when Palestinians and Jordanians backed Iraq against the U.S.-led alliance.

The organisers said both Jordan and the PLO had approved the idea for their party. But Mr. Sobeih said disputes with the PLO over control of the money and local structures were likely.

Founders Saleh Seyam, a former journalist in the PLO's Al Shabab newspaper, said Palestinians could never be completely separate from Jordan.

"We had lived under Jordanian rule for 19 years. They are in need of us and we are in need of them," Mr. Seyam said.

Israel too considers some kind of Palestinian-Jordanian entente as the best insurance against a radical state emerging from the areas being given autonomy.

The issue of Jerusalem is a key stumbling point. Israel says it will remain its undivided capital, but the Palestinians want the eastern portion as their capital.

The city has important symbolic and religious meaning for the Royal Hashemite family. King Abdullah, grandfather of King Hussein, was assassinated here in 1951 and buried in Al Aqsa Mosque. The King's great grandfather, Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali, is also buried.

Mr. Sobeih, a former organiser for the Communist Party, faulted the PLO for not coordinating its ties with Jordan into "facts on the ground." King Hussein was not consulted about the autonomy accord, but supports it.

King Hussein severed legal and administrative ties with the West Bank in July 1988 in favour of the PLO, which previously resisted the formation of parties affiliated with Jordan.

About 60 per cent of Jordan's four million population has Palestinian origins, whereas the occupied territories contain 1.5 million Palestinians.

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SETTLER RAMPAGE: A Jewish settler fires at Palestinians while his comrade changes his magazine and others take cover in Jenin, near the West Bank refugee camp of Jisr al-Zarqa early Monday. Trouble erupted after settlers put up road blocks and damaged Arab homes. Palestinians responded with stone-throwing. (AP photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arafat wants Arabs to free frozen assets

RABAT (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has asked King Hassan of Morocco to urge Arab states to release the organisation's assets frozen during the Gulf crisis. In a message to the Moroccan monarch with whom he is due to confer in Rabat Monday, Mr. Arafat said the peace accord with Israel would require "enormous" financial resources. "You are aware of the financial blockade imposed on our people and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, particularly by those close to us, which affects us painfully, all the more so because they are holding important PLO assets," he wrote. PLO assets were frozen by certain Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia when the PLO backed Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Moroccans to develop tourism in occupied lands

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A group of Moroccan businessmen will set up a company to promote tourism in Israel and the occupied lands, Israeli legislators said Sunday. The venture, unthinkable prior to the Sept. 13, Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreement, will include Israeli and Palestinian businessmen, legislator Eli Dayan told the Associated Press. "Its first goal is to promote tourism," said Mr. Dayan, a Moroccan-born lawmaker who belongs to the ruling Labour Party. Economics Minister Shimon Shetrit confirmed the venture. The announcement came with a first of its kind visit to Israel by 14 Moroccan banking, construction and industrial leaders.

Will Israeli shampoo make Egyptians go bald?

CAIRO (R) — Shampoo smuggled from Israel is turning up in Egyptian markets and a leading economist is worried that it could wipe users' pates bare. "It is very dangerous matter," Essam Rifaat, editor of Al Ahram Al Iqtissadi, wrote in Monday's edition. "We don't know what is inside the shampoo bottle and whether its contents are healthy or not... or if it will make Egyptians' hair fall out." Mr. Rifaat said he had seen shampoo and other Israeli goods brought into Egypt by merchant seamen in the free port zone of Port Said when he attended a conference there. Egypt broke the Arab boycott of Israel when it signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979.

Curfew ends in Sudan capital

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's military government ended a four-year-old curfew in the capital but most of Khartoum's 3.5 million residents stayed home on the first night. Sunday night was the first night since Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir seized power four years ago that residents were free to roam the city between midnight and 4 a.m. But most people stayed at home after midnight, partly out of habit and partly because few people had heard that the curfew had been lifted.

Iraq warns Kuwait over Bush plot trial

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's ruling Baath Party newspaper warned Kuwait's leaders Monday they would face a day of reckoning for detaining 11 Iraqis accused of trying to kill former U.S. President George Bush. "The day will come when the rulers of Kuwait shall pay the price of their crimes against Iraq and its people," the newspaper Al Thawra said. "In the forefront of judgment list will be the drama of the alleged attempt to kill the cursed criminal (U.S. President George) Bush and the detention of... Iraqis for this empty offence," it said.

Gadhafi, Mubarak to discuss easing sanctions

DOHA (AP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi are to meet in a week to discuss U.N. sanctions against Libya, a newspaper reported Monday. Qatar's Arabic-language daily, Al Sharq, said the two leaders will meet in Libya to discuss "the outcome of Egyptian contacts in connection with Libyan-West crisis." Mr. Mubarak recently had talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in the United States and with French President Francois Mitterrand in France. The pro-government paper quoted unidentified diplomatic sources in Cairo as saying that Mr. Mubarak and Colonel Qadhafi were expected to meet either in Tripoli or Toukh.

Former Filipino prisoner arrives en route home

AMMAN (AP) — A Filipino freed by Iraq after 14 months in detention arrived here Monday en route to Manila and said he never doubted his country would secure his release. Nicanc Factoran, 48, of Manila, appeared healthy but tired after his ordeal. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein ordered his release after receiving an appeal from Philippines President Fidel Ramos. "I am very happy that I'm finally going home," he told the Associated Press after meeting with officials at the Philippines embassy in Amman.

Reward doubled in Satanic Verses shooting

OSLO (AP) — The reward for information about the shooting of the Norwegian publisher of "The Satanic Verses" was doubled on Monday to 250,000 kroner (\$34,250). William Nygaard's publishing house, Aschehoug Forlag, added 125,000 kroner (\$17,125) to rewards offered after Mr. Nygaard was shot three times in the back outside his house on Oct. 11. Mr. Nygaard, 50, was released from Ullevaal hospital last Wednesday and was expected to recover fully from the wounds. He remained under police protection. "It is unbearable to not know who was behind the attack," Erik Holst of Aschehoug told the Norwegian news agency NTB. "We are happy to offer such a reward if it can help. William Nygaard is not some aloof manager. He is a central person for all employees in the publishing house." Police say no evidence linking the attack to Salman Rushdie's book "The Satanic Verses," which the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran declared blasphemous in 1989.

U.N. wants more data from Iraq

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The head of a team of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts who arrived here on Monday said Iraq had not provided full details on how it developed its nuclear weapons programme.

"We are not satisfied with the information on some subjects they have provided," said Richard Hooper, the American head of the 13-member team, which will spend a week testing radiation levels in water supplies and dealing with questions on long-term weapons monitoring.

Mr. Hooper said the team needed more information than was provided on a list of nuclear and chemical weapons suppliers given to Rolf Ekeus, the head of the United Nations special committee on disarming Iraq, during talks in Baghdad in October.

When it ended a month-long mission to Iraq on Saturday, a U.N. team of more than 60 weapons experts reported it had found no evidence Iraq was in violation of a U.N. ban on its weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Hooper said the Iraqi authorities had identified "at least in part individuals from whom they obtained technical help."

"Their reaction is that information will be provided during this mission," Mr. Hooper added. The missing information concerned how Iraq obtained its centrifuge equipment and other technical assistance, he explained.

The team was currently verifying information contained on the list of suppliers, Mr. Hooper said, but in some areas there was "still a long way to go," and information was still "in the hands of other governments." He did not specify which countries were involved.

The additional information was necessary for long-term surveillance of Iraqi weapons required under the U.N. resolutions ending the 1991 Gulf war.

U.N. officials have reported progress in dismantling Iraq's war machine.

The United Nations is also making arrangements for the safe shipment from Iraq to Russia of about 40 kilograms of nuclear fuel.

Mr. Hooper said filling in the remaining gaps was essential for the IAEA, now striving to establish the groundwork for future monitoring of Iraq's nuclear potential.

"In order to proceed with monitoring we have to establish a base for that and part of that base is not just the equipment but the procurement routes and... who provided the technical advice," he said.

Heavy fighting reported outside Afghan capital

KABUL (Agencies) — Fighters loyal to Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar attacked a provincial town controlled by Defence Ministry troops early Monday, a ministry spokesman here said.

"Heavy fighting is still going on at the moment," the spokesman, Abdullah, told a press conference.

He said the attack, which was launched by fighters belonging to Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami faction started at 5:45 a.m. (0115 GMT) from three different directions, was aimed at Taghob, a small town in Kapisa province to the east of Kabul.

"It is a fully coordinated attack by Hezb-e-Islami commanders under the direct command of Hekmatyar," Mr. Abdullah charged.

Mr. Abdullah said the attack, which he claimed had so far made no successful advances, started in Taghob despite assurances given by Mr. Hekmatyar at a Sunday cabinet meeting that "there will be a permanent ceasefire and we are not going to use weapons to solve problems in the future."

No immediate casualty figures were available, Mr. Abdullah said. But he added that he expected "heavy civilian casualties" as this was the season for the pomegranate harvest. The spokesman said some Hekmatyar commanders around Taghob had refused to join in the attack because of the harvest.

Mr. Abdullah said Defence Ministry troops would not retaliate against Mr. Hekmatyar's forces in the south part of Kabul.

"The fight started outside Kabul and we do not want it to

COLUMN BY ROBERT COOPER

2 11-year-olds stand trial in toddler's murder

LIVERPOOL, England (AFP) — Two 11-year-old boys went on trial for murder here Monday, the youngest persons so charged in England in 30 years. After the brutal killing of a toddler that produced a wave of outrage here,

Although British criminal law allows persons as young as 10 to be tried for murder, special conditions were imposed by the presiding judge. Neither the defendants nor any of the juvenile witnesses in the case will be named or identified in any way. In addition to their lawyers, each defendant was accompanied by a court-appointed social worker to remain at his side at all times. Special benches were also constructed so the defendants would be able to sit high enough to see the proceedings over the courtroom railing.

The two boys are charged with kidnapping and murdering two-year-old James Bulger, who had strayed from his mother's side at a shopping centre in Bootle on Feb. 12, his badly beaten body was found on the bank of a railway line in the town. The two are also charged with trying to abduct a second two-year-old boy earlier on the same day. The killing stirred bitterness and hatred in the tiny working class community of Kirkby near here where the Bulger family lives.

Diana 'seeking reconciliation' with Charles

LONDON (AP) — A tabloid newspaper reported that Princess Diana was seeking a reconciliation with her estranged husband, Prince Charles. Diana is seeking "a marriage of convenience," the Sunday Express said, quoting unnamed friends and "informed sources." "She would be happy to live under the same roof as Charles, but not necessarily the same floor," it said. The newspaper said Prince Charles was cool towards the idea.

Prince Charles and Princess Diana formally separated in December 1992 after 11 years of marriage. They have two children, Prince William, 11, and Prince Harry, 9.

Prince Edward visits Ivory Coast

ABIDJAN (AFP) — Britain's Prince Edward arrived Sunday in Yamoussoukro for a four-day visit to Ivory Coast, national radio said here. Queen Elizabeth's youngest son is visiting as part of his work for youth organisations and was welcomed at the airport by Foreign Minister Amara Essy and Sports and Youth Minister Rene Diby. Prince Edward is also due to meet Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara in Abidjan as well as British businessmen working here.

41 forms of unmapped sea life identified

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) — Researchers examining fossils in northeastern Brazil have identified 41 species of sea life never registered before, the daily O Globo reported Sunday. The shelfish fossils were discovered by a team from the Federal University of Pernambuco along a stretch of the northeast coast about 2,478 kilometers north of Rio. The shelfish, ranging from 2-20 centimetre (one inch to 10 inches), long, lived up to 83 million years ago, paleontologist Geraldo Barros Muniz, director of research for the 12-year-old project, told the newspaper.

Japan firms hire record number of disabled — survey

TOKYO (R) — Private Japanese companies employed a record 240,965 handicapped people as of June 1993, but still not meeting minimum legal requirements, a Labour Ministry survey showed. The figure, up a scant 0.05 per cent from 1992, represents 1.41 per cent of the total workforce, short of the target ratio of 1.6 per cent set by the Handicapped Employment Promotion Law, it said. "Employment of the handicapped has increased as society better understands their needs. On the other hand, the effects of the recession have lowered the rate of employment in general," Kyodo News Agency quoted a ministry official as saying.